

## Message Text

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ACTION PM-04

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 IGA-02 DHA-02 TRSE-00 ACDA-07

AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

MC-02 IO-13 EB-07 COME-00 /095 W

-----018217 121106Z /10

R 120506Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7658

INFO CINCPAC HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 COLOMBO 2387

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, CE

SUBJ: ASSESSMENT OF US SECURITY PROGRAMS FOR FY 1979

1. THIS MESSAGE REVIEWS THE HISTORY OF OUR VERY LIMITED MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO SRI LANKA IN RECENT YEARS AND RECOMMENDS THAT A MODEST LINE ITEM BE RETAINED IN THE FY '79 SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR TRAINING UNDER THE IMET PROGRAM. END SUMMARY.

2. US MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO SRI LANKA, DELIVERED AND OFFERED, HAS BEEN VERY MODEST, AS BEFITS A NON-ALIGNED ISLAND NATION WITH NO OBVIOUS EXTERNAL THREAT. SRI LANKA'S SMALL MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT, WHICH, TOGETHER WITH THE POLICE, ACCOUNTS FOR ABOUT 3.7 PER CENT OF THE ANNUAL BUDGET (COLOMBO 1912), IS DESIGNED PRIMARILY TO MEET AN INTERNAL THREAT. DURING THE INSURGENCY OF 1971 IT WAS CALLED UPON TO DO SO, IN A SOMEWHAT PROTRACTED AND BLOODY OPERATION TO CRUSH A RURAL YOUTHFUL INSURGENCY MOVEMENT THAT HAD BROKEN OUT IN WIDELY SCATTERED AREAS OF THE ISLAND.

3. IN THE AFTERMATH OF THAT INSURGENCY, AND IN RESPONSE TO  
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THE GSL APPEALS FOR SPEEDY HELP, THE US GRANTED ITS ONLY SIGNIFICANT MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO SRI LANKA IN THE FORM OF EQUIPMENT (1971/72), WHICH WAS AGREED UPON AND DELIVERED IN A TIMELY FASHION THAT WAS GREATLY APPRECIATED BY A HERETOFORE NONE TOO FRIENDLY GOVERNMENT (IT HAD JUST EXPELLED THE PEACE CORPS AND THE ASIA FOUNDATION). US RELATIONS WITH THAT GOVERNMENT IMPROVED ALMOST STEADILY SINCE. IN THE YEARS SINCE 1972

WE HAVE RETAINED IN THE SECURITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM EACH YEAR A MODEST LINE ITEM FOR POSSIBLE MILITARY TRAINING IN CONUS. THIS GOVERNMENT, ANXIOUS TO MAINTAIN ITS IMAGE AS A LEADING MEMBER OF THE NON-ALIGNED WORLD (IT HOSTED THE 5TH NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT IN 1976), HAS NOT ACCEPTED OUR ANNUAL OFFER OF TRAINING, ALTHOUGH THE THREE BRANCHES OF THE ARMED FORCES STRONGLY FAVOR TAKING ADVANTAGE OF IT. TWICE IN THE PAST TWO YEARS THE GSL HAS WELCOMED INFORMAL VISITS BY CINCPAC, WHICH TER-

MINATED USEFUL CONTACTS WITH KEY SL MILITARY LEADERS.

4. FOLLOWING THE GENERAL ELECTION ON JULY 21, THE FIRST IN SEVEN YEARS, THERE WILL BE A NEW GOVERNMENT, WHICH MAY WELL BE EVEN MORE FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARD THE US. RETENTION OF A SMALL LINE ITEM FOR GRANT TRAINING (IMET) WILL CONTINUE TO LEAVE US THE FLEXIBILITY TO RESPOND TO ANY REASONABLE REQUEST AT A TIME WHEN NOT ONLY WILL THE GOVERNMENT CHANGE BUT UNDOUBTEDLY THE TOP ECHELON OF COMMAND OF AT LEAST THE ARMY, AND POSSIBLY THE NAVY AND AIR FORCE AS WELL.

5. US INTERESTS IN SRI LANKA ARE MODEST. WE SEEK SRI LANKA'S CONTINUING NEUTRALITY AND HER CONTINUING MODERATING ROLE IN INTERNATIONAL FORA ON POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE US. MORE SPECIFICALLY, WE WISH TO MAINTAIN ACCESS TO SRI LANKA'S PORTS FOR U.S. SHIPS, NAVAL AND COMMERCIAL, AND TO HER TERRITORY FOR VOICE OF AMERICA RELAY  
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FACILITIES. PROMOTION OF THESE INTERESTS IS BEST SERVED BY MAINTAINING FRIENDLY WORKING RELATIONS WITH THE GSL, REGARDLESS OF THE PARTY IN POWER. WE ARE IN AGREEMENT WITH THE GSL'S EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN INTERNAL SECURITY, TO PROTECT AND ADVANCE DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES, AND TO ADHERE TO PROGRAMS GUARANTEEING BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS. IN WORKING TOWARDS OUR OBJECTIVES, WE HAVE BEEN SEEKING TO MAINTAIN A RELATIVELY LOW AMERICAN PROFILE. WE HAVE PROVIDED U.S. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO ASSIST SRI LANKA IN MOVING TOWARD DEVELOPMENT OF A RATIONAL ECONOMIC PROGRAM AND TO MEET SOME BASIC NUTRITIONAL AND HEALTH NEEDS.

6. SRI LANKA DOES NOT PERCEIVE ANY PRESENT OR FUTURE EXTERNAL THREAT. ALTHOUGH THERE IS PROBABLY A LATENT FEAR OF THE COLOSSUS TO THE NORTH, INDIA, THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD OF INDIAN AGGRESSION AGAINST SRI LANKA. HOWEVER, THE SRI LANKA NAVY DOES PERFORM A COAST GUARD MISSION IN PATROLING THE COASTS TO DISCOURAGE SMUGGLING AND ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION FROM INDIA. THE INTERNAL THREAT IS MUCH MORE REAL. FACED WITH A STEADILY DETERIORATING ECONOMY AND UNABLE TO COPE WITH MASSIVE UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT, OR A FESTERING MINORITY PROBLEM, SOME GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION LEADERS FORESEE THE

POSSIBILITY OF CIVIL DISORDERS OR ANOTHER INSURGENCY, EITHER ONE MOUNTED BY RADICAL DISSATISFIED YOUTHS, SUCH AS OCCURED IN 1971 OR OF AN ARMED SEPARATIST MOVEMENT BY THE TAMIL MINORITY GROUP, PARTICULARLY BY YOUNG HOTHEADS WHO BELIEVE THE TAMILS WILL NEVER GET A FAIR SHAKE FROM ANY SINHALESE GOVERNMENT. THE MILITARY LEADERSHIP IS OPTIMISTIC THAT IT CAN DEAL WITH AN INSURGENCY SITUATION. WE BELIEVE THIS INTERNAL THREAT IS REAL, UNLESS THE GOVERNMENT CAN DEMONSTRATE SOME EARLY PROGRESS IN SOLVING TOUGH ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS. THE GOVERNMENT HAS RECOGNIZED THE PROBLEMS, BUT BEING STRAPPED FOR RESOURCES CAN ONLY TAKE STOP-GAP MEASURES THAT IN MANY CASES ARE MERELY PALLIATIVES AND DO NOT SOLVE THE FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEMS, WHICH AT LEAST IN THE SHORT RUN APPEAR INTRACTABLE. IT IS PROBLEMATIC WHETHER THE NEXT ONE WILL DO MUCH BETTER.  
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ACTION PM-04

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 COLOMBO 2387

7. SRI LANKA'S INITIAL DETERRENT TO INTERNAL DISSIDENCE IS THE PARAMILITARY NATIONAL POLICE FORCE. AS IN 1971, HOWEVER, THE THREE MILITARY SERVICES WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE RAPIDLY COMMITTED TO ACTION, WITH THE ARMY BEARING THE BRUNT. THE GSL HAS TRAINED AND ORGANIZED THE MILITARY SERVICES FOR SUCH AN ANTI-INSURGENCY ROLE. U.S. SUPPORT FOR SRI LANKA'S MILITARY FORCES HAS BEEN MINIMAL AND IS WARRANTED BY OUR INTEREST IN SRI LANKA CONTINUING TO BE A STABLE DEMOCRATIC

SOCIETY.

8. GSL WOULD MOST LIKELY BE INTERESTED IN THE GRANT TRAINING PROGRAM (IMET), WITH EMPHASIS ON CONUS TRAINING IN LEADERSHIP (STAFF COLLEGES), INSTRUCTORS TRAINING, ENGINEERING, TECHNICAL TRAINING, AND ADMINISTRATION. SUCH TRAINING WOULD ENHANCE THE MILITARY'S CAPABILITY FOR INTERNAL DEFENSE AND FOR MEETING AN INSURGENCY SITUATION, THEREBY CONTRIBUTING TO STABILITY OF THE COUNTRY. THE TRAINING WOULD BE USED TO UPGRADE THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE SERVICE AND WOULD HELP TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF INDIGENOUS TRAINING.

9. DEFENSE EXPENDITURES IN SRI LANKA ARE CONSISTENT WITH MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR MAINTENANCE OF INTERNAL SECURITY AND DO NOT HAVE A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE ECONOMY OR DEVELOPMENT.  
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MENT. SINCE THE PROPOSED TRAINING WOULD BE ON A GRANT BASIS, THERE WOULD BE NO ADDITIONAL BURDEN ON SRI LANKA'S ECONOMY, DEBT SERVICING CAPABILITY, OR DEVELOPMENT PLANS.

10. NO USG OR CIVILIAN CONTRACT PERSONNEL WOULD BE REQUIRED IN COUNTRY. COMPARABLE TRAINING IS AVAILABLE FROM A NUMBER OF SOURCES. GIVEN ITS POLICY OF NON-ALIGNMENT, THE GSL WOULD NOT HESITATE TO ACCEPT TRAINING ELSEWHERE. MOST LIKELY SOURCES WOULD BE INDIA, PAKISTAN, THE UK, THE USSR, AUSTRALIA, OR THE PRC.

11. SA TO SRI LANKA DOES NOT INVOLVE THE SALE OR TRANSFER OF DEFENSE ARTICLES. NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, INDIA, PAKISTAN, BANGLADESH, ARE SUPERIOR TO SRI LANKA IN MILITARY POWER.

12. SRI LANKA'S RECORD ON HUMAN RIGHTS HAS BEEN GENERALLY EXCELLENT. PROVISION OF TRAINING UNDER SA WILL NOT EFFECT THE HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES OF THE GSL.

13. SRI LANKA IS NOT A SUPPLIER OF ARMS, NOR DOES SHE HARBOR HOPES OF BECOMING A MILITARY POWER. A RESTRAINT ON THE TRANSFER OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS WOULD WORK IN HER FAVOR, AND SRI LANKA WOULD PROBABLY SUPPORT A U.S. POLICY OF ARMS RESTRAINT.

14. SRI LANKA'S ARMED SERVICES NEED TRAINING IN LEADERSHIP, INSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES, ENGINEERING, TECHNICAL FIELDS, AND ADMINISTRATION AND PROVISION OF SUCH TRAINING WOULD BE IN ACCORD WITH U.S. INTERESTS. AT THIS TIME, IT IS UNLIKELY THAT THE GSL WOULD PURCHASE EQUIPMENT FROM THE U.S. UNDER AN FMS PROGRAM. BECAUSE OF A STAGNANT ECONOMY AND EXTREMELY LIMITED FX, THE GSL WOULD NOT PAY THE TRAVEL AND LIVING COSTS OF AN IMET PROGRAM.

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## Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009